THE ADVENTURES OF PRINCE LULU.

Prince Lulu was the only son of King Gratanfulish, a mighty monarch in his own estimation, but whose noble deeds ungrateful history has forgotten to record. The negligence or ignorance of geographers has likewise left us unacquainted with the site of his kingdom—Big-but-poor. The last syllable, however, of its name seems to show that it was somewhere in the south of Asia. The son of this great king was brought up in a manner befitting his station. A renowned preceptor—Fatanlazee—who had at an early age acquired the highest distinctions of learning, and had ever since spent about four-fifths of his time in eating, drinking, and sleeping, was appointed his chief instructor. Withal, Prince Lulu was melancholy and discontented.

"I am sick of this life," he said to his tutor; "I would see the rest of the world. You have often told me that you are the greatest logician in the world, you shall therefore persuade my father to let me travel."

Fatanlazee grew pale on hearing these words.

"Your royal father," said he, "is more in the habit of chopping off heads than chopping logic when he finds any one who ventures to differ from his own royal opinion."

Prince Lulu frowned.

"My father may behead you," said he, "if you do what I tell you to do, but I certainly will if you don't."

Fatanlazee, after revolving for some time in his mind these alternatives, at last came to the conclusion that it was better to incur simply the risk than the certainty of being put to death. He therefore, accompanied by the prince, went to the king and made known to him his son's desire.

The monarch was astounded and angry when he heard of the indiscreet wish of Lulu.

"What could have put so ignoble a desire into your heart?" he said to him. "And how could you proceed in life unguided by the advice which I daily take the trouble to pour into your ear?"

The remembrance of this advice was too much for the prince, who incontinently yawned. Never had this indecorous act been committed in the royal presence before, save once, when a courtier interrupted the king in an oration he was making on his own clemency by a most undeniable yawn. The king had then finished his speech on clemency, and stopped the courtier's propensity for yawning by having him instantly decapitated. He was, however, loth to inflict this punishment on his son, though by no means inclined to be so forbearing towards his son's preceptor. Fatanlazee now saw himself in danger of undergoing the fate he had anticipated, when the prince, taking pity on him, calmed his father's wrath by retracting his request for permission to travel, and by asseverating that what had been mistaken for a yawn was only a gape of wonder caused by recollection of his father's wisdom.

But, although the prince had openly renounced his design, he still resolved to effect it secretly. He had a young attendant, named Ahmed, to whom he was much attached, and to him he communicated his scheme of flight, proposing that Ahmed should accompany him.

"My prince," said Ahmed, "I can well understand that you, who have never seen the world, and do not know how detestable it is, should wish to make this expedition, but I who have experienced the storms of life am by no means anxious to leave the only quiet haven I have found."

"That may be, Ahmed," replied the prince. "The question, however, is not whether you shall leave it—no, but whether you shall beignominiously expelled for ever from it, or leave it now and return to it hereafter. If you refuse to accompany me, I will have you disgraced; but if you go with me you shall, if it ever lies in my power, be rewarded for your devotion to me."

The prince persuaded Ahmed as easily as he had persuaded Fatanlazee. They both disguised themselves, and, having concealed about their persons as many valuables as they could conveniently carry, they stole out of the palace. They travelled about from country to country for some time until the prince, who was tired of being only an observer, expressed a wish to become an actor in life.

"What occupation," said he to Ahmed, "is most beneficial to mankind?"

"Least injurious, I suppose you mean?" replied Ahmed, who was by no means in a philanthropic mood, or inclined to give other men credit for feelings which he did not himself possess. "The

chief object of man seems to be to do as much good to himself and as much harm to others as he can. Priests threaten others with horrible evils which they don't apprehend for themselves, and, whilst they don't permit themselves to fight, excite the worst quarrels known in the world. Lawyers ruin all that come into their clutches, and enrich themselves. Doctors physic all they can except themselves, and convey people very expeditiously out of the world, though they themselves are rather long-lived. Merchants, to benefit themselves, cheat their neighbours. Soldiers murder—but, as they also run the risk of being murdered, perhaps theirs is the honestest vocation of all, except that of husbandmen, who do good and no harm."

"We will then become soldiers," rejoined Lulu; "and when we are tired of that occupation we will till the ground."

"A good choice," said Ahmed. "We can ride and use the sword, so we are tolerably fitted to be soldiers; and as for husbandry, it seems to me a very simple employment, and to consist chiefly in putting seed into the ground, and waiting till it comes up again."

They accordingly purchased horses and arms, and enlisted themselves under a commander who had contracted with the king of the country to raise a body of men for his service, in consideration of being allowed to collect and appropriate to his own use a certain portion of the public revenue. As, however, this commander used his soldiers more in his own service than the king's, and chiefly employed them in enforcing the payment of the taxes due to him, the prince speedily became disgusted with military service.

"Let us desert!" he said to Ahmed.

"We shall be shot," said Ahmed, "if we are not successful.'"

"What does it matter if we are?" yawned the prince.

His follower seemed to have formed a different opinion as to the importance of such an event. He however consented to join in the act, and the desertion was effected in safety. They now determined to become agriculturists. They sold their horses and arms, rented land, purchased implements, put corn into the ground, and sat down to wait for its re-appearance. They had passed a very short time in this last occupation when an event happened that diverted their attention, and put a stop to the prince's career as an agriculturist. The princess Lolah, daughter of the king of the country in which they then were, passed, unveiled in her litter along the road. Their tenement bordered upon the road, so that they had an opportunity of beholding this charming princess. As soon as the prince saw her he discovered that he could not live without her, and began to consult with Ahmed as to the way by which he might obtain this necessity of his existence. Ahmed advised him to sue in the form of a prince, and not in that of a pauper; but the prince determined to attempt gaining her affections under his assumed character. As he had acquired so much experience in agriculture, he naturally thought of obtaining access to the princess by procuring the situation of under-gardener. There happened to be a vacancy amongst the under-gardeners, and, as every office from that of the prime minister downwards was to be bought, Prince Lulu had no difficulty in obtaining the situation. He soon also found an opportunity of commencing his suit. The princess was in the habit of walking in the garden, and passed by Prince Lulu as he was employed in some of the duties of his new occupation. He determined to profit by the occasion, and shot at her one of those amorous glances which he had found very efficacious when he had directed them against the ladies of his father's court; but the mode of courtship employed by a prince towards dependants may not be equally successful when made use of by a dependant towards a princess.

"Insolent slave," she said, "how dare you look at me? But I will cure you of your impertinence."

Then, clapping her hands, she bade an eunuch, who appeared, to cut off the head of the prince. Lulu, astounded at this unexpected recoil of his shot, stammered out:

"Beware what you do—I am the son of the King of Big-but-poor."

The princess no sooner heard this but she burst out into a fit of laughter. When she had recovered she said to the prince:

"Slave, you have amused me by your audacious lie. I will therefore change your punishment: you shall either receive fifty strokes with the bastinado, or a hundred with a slipper. Choose which you will."

The prince made election of what he considered the lighter punishment, namely, that of the bastinado. But he was grievously mistaken, and when he had received thirty strokes on the soles of the feet he cried out, and prayed that the punishment might be commuted for that of the slipper. He accordingly received a hundred blows with the slipper, and was turned out of the garden.

"I would risk my life to obtain her," he groaned, as he crawled away, "but I will not incur the chance of being bastinadoed."

He returned to Ahmed, whom he found moodily overlooking his field.

"I have been bastinadoed," exclaimed the prince.

"I cannot see any sign of my corn," said Ahmed.

"Let us go back to Big-but-poor," said Lulu.

And they went back accordingly.

Their return was opportune. They found that the king had been dead for about three months; that the people had, in that time, tried and become disgusted with three different forms of government, and were at a loss to discover another variety. In this dilemma they readily received Prince Lulu as heir to the old king.

Lulu was no sooner safely enthroned than he sent Ahmed to the father of the Princess Lolah to demand for him the hand of his daughter. That monarch was much perplexed by the proposal, and not being himself able to decide, took the unusual course of consulting the wishes of his daughter. She, however, relieved him from all embarrassment by promptly declining the honour. Lulu, nothing

daunted, levied a large army and invaded the kingdom of Lolah's father. He defeated his opponent's army, besieged his capital, and demanded his daughter in marriage a second time.

"King," said the father of Lolah, "you have, since you first demanded my daughter, shown your devotion to her by the most heroic deeds. You have ravaged my kingdom. and with the loss of five thousand of your subjects have slain ten thousand of mine. I can no longer refuse."

Whether the old King was moved by the heroism of Lulu, or the necessity of his situation, is a question into which the writer will not enter. Suffice it to say that he yielded with a very good grace, but his daughter with a very bad one. She returned with King Lulu to Big-but-poor with the determination, however, to avoid marriage with him if possible. Ahmed, who was a handsome young fellow and had been raised to great honours by his master, was admitted freely to her society; and she quickly established a flirtation with him.

"Ahmed," she said to him, "I do not love your master, but I do love you. Let us fly together."

"Queen of my desires," said Ahmed, "if King Lulu should recapture us, he would assuredly put me to death."

"You are wonderfully prudent," said Lolah, with scorn, "but a woman's wrath is more to be feared than a man's, and if you do not accede to my wish I will find means to have you impaled."

"Delight of my eyes," replied Ahmed, "I prefer eloping with you."

Next morning Lulu could see neither Ahmed nor Lolah, but he received two letters which fully explained the cause of their absence.

One was from Ahmed, and was as follows:

King Lulu,—I had thought to repay your favours to me with gratitude and devotion; but my fate has determined otherwise.

The other was from Lolah:

You thought to marry me, though it was evident that I had no inclination for you; but I have balked you, and revenged myself the more on you by fleeing with your servant.

This was the first stroke of real adversity that the King had received, and it did him good, as it does most men. He had lost his friend and his mistress at one fell swoop, and, resolving with pride and manliness to overcome his mortification, he applied himself with ardour to state affairs, and found in continued occupation a happiness he had never before felt.